

ARTHUR BRADLEY



24th August 1917

1892-1917 Aged 24

Second Lieutenant, M.M., 6th (Service) Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.

Arthur Bradley was the elder of two sons born to Peter Bradley and Lillie Marshall who married at All Saints Church Batley in 1891. Their fathers were both woollen textile manufacturers. The family firm of David Bradley Ltd., Grove Mills, Morley, had been founded by Peter's father. Arthur was born on 23rd September 1892, and was baptized at Queen Street Wesleyan Methodist Church, where he also first went to school. He later attended the Quakers' School at Rawdon, before he went to Bradford Grammar School for his final year, 1906 to 1907, in form Third Modern middle. Arthur performed creditably on the arts side, however he struggled in Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics. He then worked for his father who took on the family business on his father's death in 1909. The family home was at Westfield House, Tingley Common, near Morley. In his spare time Arthur served in the Territorial Force, in the Morley ('H') Company of the 4th Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. He was also a member of the Morley Liberal Club.

Arthur was twenty-one and single when the war began, and he had no hesitation in undertaking to serve overseas. His battalion disembarked in France on 13th April 1915 as part of 148th Brigade, 49th West Riding Division. Shortly after he was promoted from Lance Corporal to Sergeant. He survived the Western Front for nineteen months, serving for long periods at Ypres in 1915 and the Somme in 1916. His brave conduct during the latter led to the award of the Military Medal at the start of September 1916. Towards the end of the year he was recommended for a commission and returned home to join an Officer Training Battalion. On 3rd January 1917 he married Frances Dorothy Robinson, known as Dorothy, from Huntington near York. She was three years older than Arthur. Her father Charles was in business as a 'Fancy Draper and Hosier' in York, and the best man at their wedding was her elder brother John, a Lieutenant in the R.A.M.C. Arthur spent twelve weeks training to be an officer and received his commission on 29th May 1917. He joined the 6th Battalion K.O.Y.L.I. on 7th August as they were preparing to move into the Ypres area to participate in an attempt to capture Inverness Copse, near the Menin Road, which was planned for the morning of 22nd August.



Bradley's battalion was in support in Sanctuary Wood when the attack began at 7 a.m., having made its way forward in extreme darkness over a narrow track and under bombardment with mustard gas without losing a single casualty. During the day, and over the next two, individual companies and platoons were fed into the battle in support of the two leading battalions of 43rd Brigade. On 24th August the German shelling was intense and they made several counter-attacks in strength, one of which was supported by flame-throwers. The Germans drove the British out of Inverness Copse three times, and each time the survivors reformed and advanced again. In a letter home Private Holliday of Bradley's company described the fighting as the most intense they had seen. Bradley was killed after taking part in a bayonet charge by a force from three battalions which, temporarily, regained the position. Over three days the 6/K.O.Y.L.I. lost 36 officers and men killed, including the Commanding Officer, with another 314 wounded and missing. Arthur's body was not recovered so his name is on the Tyne Cot Memorial to the Missing.

Arthur Bradley was said to have been 'very popular among the workpeople' at Grove Mill 'and among his comrades at the Front.' Major Wilson, the O.C. 6th K.O.Y.L.I., wrote how 'he set a splendid example to his men, being cheery and brave in a strenuous time ... He was a born fighter, and died the death of a gallant officer.' Dorothy remarried in 1921. Her brother was awarded the Military Cross and survived the war.



Acknowledgements:

There is no photo of Arthur Bradley in the School's memorial book. His enlistment and death were published in the same edition of *The Bradfordian* for November 1917, which gives his school years as 1907-1908. The B.G.S. Annual Report shows him to have been in Third Modern middle 1906-1907. Ancestry.com was used for the family history. The most useful source for his life is the extensive obituary from the *Morley Observer*, 7th September 1917, which with his photo in uniform from the Morley Liberal Club War Memorial were posted by Clive McManus on the Imperial War Museum Lives of the First World War website (<<https://livesofthefirstworldwar.org/lifestory/458675>>). The account of his wedding to Dorothy is from the *Yorkshire Evening Post* 3rd January 1917 and *Yorkshire Post* 4th January 1917 (from findmypast.co.uk).

There is no Officer Personal Record for Bradley in The National Archives catalogue. His Medal Index Card wrongly records he died 2nd September 1918, and dates his discharge to a commission to 29th June 1917. The U.K. WW1 Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914-1920 Pieces 1468, 2763 (Ancestry.com) give the date as 29th May 1917. The only reference I have located to the date of his award of the Military Medal is the *Daily Gazette for Middlesbrough* 2nd September 1916, citing the *London Gazette* 1st September 1916. The War Diary for the 1/4th K.O.Y.L.I. (WO-95-2806) is very detailed and records the honours awarded to enlisted men, but I could not find Bradley among them. The 6th K.O.Y.L.I. War Diary (from Ancestry.com) is also very detailed and records his joining the battalion on 7th August. Its account of the events of 22nd-24th August has been used here, supplemented by <<http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums/topic/80827-14th-division-inverness-copse-glencourse-wood/>> which includes a useful map, although primarily concerned with the 8th and 9th K.R.R.C.

Dorothy's second marriage took place at Scarborough in the final quarter of 1921. Her husband Frank Barker lived at Home Farm, Bretton, near Wakefield.

The photo of the grave of Peter and Lillie Bradley was posted on Ancestry.com by 'judithberry42' (<https://www.ancestry.co.uk/mediaui-viewer/tree/137901/person/451741982/media/e468ad25-718e-44fe-8299-7c4934559fb3>).

This biography was researched with thanks to all listed above and composed by Nick Hooper (Nhooper1956@googlemail.com) August 2017.

'Faithful unto death'

